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ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY.

By JOHN D. PARKER, Secretary.

In a general sense science is restricted to what is certainly known. The boundaries have been well ascertained, the general features mapped out, and the territory is clearly defined. In a more specific sense, science observes the phenomena of things, produces in experiments results not ordinarily occurring in nature,—inducts facts, deduces truths, collects general principles, and arranges them in systematic order.

The scientific *method* of the present age is different from that of the past. The ancient logic is fruitless as a means for the discovery of truth. The inductive philosopher of the present age collects all the facts of his subject, classifies them into tables, expunges those that are not significant, gathers the vintage, scrutinizes with respect to true value and import, illustrates if practicable by actual experiment, discovers the laws of phenomena, and rises in his knowledge, from one generalization to another, until all the facts crystallize into one comprehensive system.

The scientific *spirit* of the present age simply inquires, "What is truth?" Truth is to be found at all hazards, and bought at any price. All known things are to be laid under contribution. New appliances are to be constructed, and new methods of analysis invented, until we stand, if possible, face to face with the absolute.

The scientific spirit of the present age is also liberal. Its faith is as large as the universe. All things are believed possible until proved impossible; all things are believed true until proved untrue. Nothing is to be rejected that stands the touchstone of observation, comparison and experiment.

The scientific spirit of the present age is also fearless. All truth must be consistent with itself. No two facts of the universe can contradict each other. No two laws of the universe can disprove each other. Scientific men are, therefore, willing to follow whithersoever truth may lead them. The most venerable errors of the past, however cherished and embalmed in the human heart, are to be destroyed. The most sacred shrines of the old world are to be desecrated, the idols of the temple of science to be thrown down, and the foundations of the temple itself to be removed. Science lays its fearless hand even on revelation itself, and gives it a new interpretation.

The *results* of inductive scientific investigation are almost beyond belief. Our respected ancestors, only three or four centuries ago, were little better than barbarians. The darkness of that period is profound and painful. "Out of that darkness and chaos," says a recent writer, "have come all our civil and religious freedom, all our philanthropy and benevolence, all our diffused comfort and luxury, most of our good manners and morals, and all the splendid achievements of our modern scientific investigation." As the inductive philosopher seated himself before the chaff heaps of antiquity to winnow out the grains of truth, a mighty task was laid upon him. Every premise must be thoroughly established, every observation re-observed, every experiment reconducted, and every comparison recollected. Nothing less than a new creation lay before him. Well may the works of the great founder of the inductive philosophy be christened *Novum Organum* and *Instantatis Magna.*

Moved by the impulses of the age, a few naturalists in 1867 resolved if possible to effect an organization for the cultivation of science, particularly in its relation to the State of Kansas. Kansas occupies an important field in its scientific aspects. The scientific marvels of our age flow out of associated effort. Scientists need opportunity to compare results and effect exchanges. They need to be inspired to go forth into the fields of nature by the presence of other explorers.

After considerable correspondence among the naturalists of the State in reference to the possibility of effecting such an organization, a letter was published in the Kansas *Journal of Education* for March, 1868, calling attention to the benefits of such a society and the necessity of effecting an organization at an early day. The publication of this letter met with such favor and called forth so many responses from the friends of science throughout the State, that the following "call" was issued in July of the same year :

"STATE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

"We, the undersigned, desirous of securing the advantages arising from association in scientific pursuits, and of giving a more systematic direction to scientific research in our State, do hereby invite all persons in the State interested in natural science to meet at Topeka on the first Tuesday of September next, at 3 P. M. at the college building, for the purpose of organizing a State Natural History Society.

JOHN FRASER,	G. F. CHAPIN,
D. H. ROBINSON,	J. H. CARRUTH,
B. F. MUDGE,	R. D. PARKER,
J. A. BANFIELD,	JEFF. ROBINSON,
J. S. HOUGHAM,	PETER MCVICAR,
J. D. PARKER,	F. H. SNOW,
R. A. BARKER,	J. S. WHITMAN,
D. BROCKWAY,	RICHARD CORDLEY,

J. R. SWALLOW."

Pursuant to this call, a meeting of the naturalists of the State was held in Lincoln College, Topeka, Kansas, September 1st, 1868. On mature deliberation and thorough discussion, an organization was effected under the name of the Kansas Natural History Society.

At the third annual meeting of the Society, held in the University building at Lawrence, on the 5th and 6th of September, 1870, President John Fraser suggested that the scope of the Society be enlarged to comprehend the whole field of science within the borders of the State.

On motion, Messrs. John Fraser, F. H. Snow, D. H. Robinson, Frederick W. Bardwell and John D. Parker, having been appointed a committee on enlargement of the scope of the Society, made the following report, which was adopted:

WHEREAS, The unexpected success of this young Society, as at present organized, has awakened in many the desire to have its scope enlarged so as to embrace in its membership observers and investigators in other lines of scientific inquiry; and,

WHEREAS, It appears to us that such a change in our organization is calculated to promote the interests of science, and thereby the higher interests of our State; therefore,

Resolved, That the name and scope of our Society be so changed as to include every line of scientific exploration and observation conducted by residents within our State.

At the fourth annual meeting, held in the rooms of the Board of Education at Leavenworth, on the 25th and 26th of October, 1871, the Constitution and By-Laws were so amended as to embrace in the membership of the Society observers and investigators in every line of scientific inquiry; and the name of the Society was changed from the Kansas Natural History Society to the Kansas Academy of Science.